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### **A Work in Progress:**

**The United Kingdom's Campaign against Radicalization**

**By James Wither**



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# **A Work in Progress:**

## **The United Kingdom's Campaign against Radicalization\***

By James Wither\*\*

Editorial Date: December 2006

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The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the viewpoint of the governments of the United Kingdom, United States or the Federal Republic of Germany.

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*I speak to you today about the blessed raid in London which came as a blow to the insolent British Crusader pride and made it sip from the same glass from which it had long made the Muslims drink.*

***Al Zawahiri***

## **Introduction**

The United Kingdom (UK) has ample experience of terrorism. Over three thousand people were killed during the thirty-year long campaign by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) for a united Ireland. However, the death toll from a single attack never exceeded twenty-nine and the British public developed a certain stoicism in the face of intermittent bombings in London and other British cities. Like other European separatist groups, PIRA sought to establish legitimacy and broaden support by largely restricting its killings to representatives of the British government, members of the security forces<sup>1</sup> and collaborators. Indiscriminate attacks on civilians were generally avoided and warnings were often sent to the British authorities before bomb attacks on civilian or infrastructure targets. When suicide bombers struck the London transport system without warning on 7 July 2005, killing fifty-two people and injuring over seven hundred, it marked a stark departure from PIRA's methods and highlighted the fact that the UK faced a terrorist threat far more ruthless and dangerous than anything that had preceded it.

Since the 1970s, comprehensive anti-terrorist measures, including tough legislation, evolved to keep pace with an able and adaptive adversary. Nevertheless, the battle against PIRA provides few if any lessons for dealing with ideologically motivated terrorists. Although Irish republicanism was nominally a social revolutionary movement, its leaders had little regard for radical political or religious ideologies. Break away groups, like the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) that embraced Marxist-Leninism never had more than minimal support amongst republicans. As in any counter-insurgency, "winning hearts and minds" was an important component of British strategy in Northern Ireland, but the UK was not confronted by terrorists motivated by a radical and uncompromising ideology. Unlike France, Britain did not experience terrorism by Muslim radicals in the 1990s. The intelligence services monitored Islamic radicals in the UK, but until the attacks of "9/11", the main counter-terrorism effort remained focused on Irish republican dissidents who rejected the peace process in Northern Ireland. Consequently, radical Muslim militants and preachers, such as Abu Hamza and Abdallah al Faisal, were able to exploit relatively lax asylum procedures and find refuge in the UK in the 1990s to propagate their extremist version of Islam.

After 2001, the UK became a major focus for what is now generally referred to as Islamist<sup>2</sup> terrorism, not least because of the government's active support for United States (US) military

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<sup>1</sup> Families of service personnel and people who associated or worked with the security forces were also regarded as legitimate targets.

<sup>2</sup> Islamism refers to political ideologies derived from Muslim fundamentalists who believe that Islam is not only a religion but also a holistic system that provides the political, legal, economic, and social foundations for society. "Islamist" is the term generally used by Western analysts to denote radicals at the extreme end of the fundamentalist spectrum that have resorted to terrorism. However, "Islamism" is not synonymous with "Terrorism". Many Islamist groups have renounced or avoided violence. Politics rather than violence gives mainstream Islamist groups their growing influence in many parts of the world.

operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Before July 2005, the British authorities disrupted several potential attacks, including an attempt by a cell affiliated to al Qaeda to produce chemical weapons in 2003, but the security services and intelligence agencies acknowledged that a successful attack was to be expected.<sup>3</sup> It was also apparent that the threat came not only from foreign jihadists but also from British born, home grown, radicalized Muslims. A mounting awareness of the danger posed by the latter made efforts to identify and address the sources of radicalization at home and abroad a matter of major importance for the British government. These efforts acquired a new urgency after the July 2005 bombings and the discovery of further terrorist plots involving British citizens.

This paper examines the problem of countering ideological support for terrorism (CIST) in the UK. For convenience, the American acronym CIST is used in the paper, although this is not a common term in the UK. Instead, British officials and commentators normally refer to understanding and combating radicalization. The paper is structured into five parts covering: the ideology of Islamist terrorism; the sources of radicalization; the motivation and background of UK terrorists; British government policies to address radicalization; and the barriers to effective implementation of CIST measures.

### **The Ideology of Islamist Terrorism**

At a speech in parliament on 10 July 2006, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, John Reid, described the ideological threat to the UK in the following terms:

“...the people involved in those terrorist attacks are driven by a very particular and violent ideology. A common thread running through terrorist attacks of the past decade has been a claim by those involved that they have been acting in defence of Islam. It is crucial that we understand that the extreme interpretation espoused by Islamist terrorists to support their actions is not an interpretation of Islam that is shared by the vast majority of Muslims in the UK and abroad.”<sup>4</sup>

As a set of universal principles, a system of values or blueprints for an ideal society, ideologies can offer potent justifications for terrorism. Zealots can claim that sacrifice and violence are perpetrated in the service of a higher cause. Revolutionary Marxist-Leninism provided the main stimulus for 20<sup>th</sup> Century ideologically motivated terrorism, but since the collapse of the Soviet Union, radical Islamism has supplanted it as the terrorist ideology of choice. Marxist-Leninist terrorist groups of the Cold War era were prepared to use ruthless violence to achieve their objectives, but indiscriminate attacks on civilians were rare. By contrast, the rise of Islamist terrorism since the 1980s has been characterized by the use of suicide attacks intended to cause maximum civilian casualties, justified by the perpetrators on both strategic and ideological grounds. It has also raised the hitherto unthinkable prospect of a catastrophic terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

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<sup>3</sup> Intelligence and Security Committee, *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, Cm. 6785, The Stationery Office: May 2006, pp. 9 – 10.

<sup>4</sup> House of Commons, Hansard Debates for 10 July 2006 (pt 0850) Col. 1116. John Reid as head of the Home Office is the UK government minister primarily responsible for tackling domestic terrorism.

The philosophical roots of Muslim militancy are complex and it is not possible to do justice to this complexity in the short summary offered here.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, some background is necessary to provide insights into the nature of the ideology that inspires Islamist terrorism in the UK and elsewhere. Since Islamism supplanted Arab secular socialism and pan-Arabism in the 1980s, Islamists have sought to offer a simple ideological solution to the Moslem world's contemporary problems in the form of return to the fundamentals of Islam as an all-encompassing religious, political and social system. The most severe Islamists are normally referred to as Salafists<sup>6</sup>, although not all members of this Sunni group advocate violent methods to purify Islam. Islamists generally share a common religious perspective, but often differ in their interpretation of contemporary politics and events. Under the Islamist umbrella are scholars who focus exclusively on non-violent methods of conversion, political activists who seek to achieve power through the ballot box, and militant jihadists who reject the concept of the nation state and advance their agenda through violence and revolution.

Islamism offers pride in a common religious identity to relieve the feelings of anger, frustration and humiliation felt by many in the Muslim world. These emotions are aroused by many different factors, including the economic and political backwardness of much of the Middle East, but a perception that the Western powers are the source of Muslim ills has reinforced a sense of grievance. Osama bin Laden as leader of al Qaeda has effectively played on Muslim anger to gain support for his radical agenda. In a message after the '9/11' attacks, he claimed "Our nation has been tasting this humiliation and contempt for more than eighty years. Its sons are being killed. Its blood is being shed, its holy places attacked and it is not being ruled according to what God has decreed."<sup>7</sup> Consequently, al Qaeda has proved capable of mobilizing support across class, ethnic and intra-Islamic sectarian boundaries.

Islamist ideology has led to the creation of widespread grass roots social networks throughout the Middle East and, in states that have permitted their formation, Islamic parties that are well established as a legitimate political force. But the same philosophy, as it evolved in Egypt, where the Islamist movement faced brutal repression, provided the ideological basis for a particularly virulent form of extremism. The philosophical foundations of the movement are rooted in the Sunni Salafi school of Islam and in the works of seminal Islamist thinkers, Hassan al Banna (the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood) and Sayyid Abdul Ala Maududi. However, neither Maududi nor al Banna advocated terror; the first true theorist of Islamist terrorism was the Egyptian writer Sayyed Qutb. He married a Salafist interpretation of the Koran with radical socio-political theory. Like Marxist Leninism, Qutb envisaged a totalitarian, universalistic, revolutionary ideology characterized by utopian ideals and coupled with contempt for alternative political or religious systems and beliefs. Although Qutb was strongly opposed to communism, his concept of revolutionary vanguards to mobilize the masses for Islam directly echoed Lenin's concept of a

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<sup>5</sup> Recent analyses can be found in Robert Reilly, *The Roots of Islamist Ideology*, Centre for Research into Post-Communist Economies, London, February 2006 and Nathan J Brown, Amr Hamzawy and Marina Ottaway, *Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World*, Carnegie Papers, No. 67, March 2006, [www.CarnegieEndowment.org/pubs](http://www.CarnegieEndowment.org/pubs). And Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 29, No. 3, May 2006, pp. 207 – 239.

<sup>6</sup> The Arabic word *Salaf* means predecessors or early generations. Salafism refers to a fundamentalist version of Islam as supposedly practiced by the first few generations of Muslims. The creed transcends cultural and national differences. The term is often used synonymously with Wahabism. Qutbism is sometimes used to describe violent radicals to distinguish them from non-violent Salafi purists.

<sup>7</sup> Doha Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel Television, in Arabic, 1825 hrs GMT, 7 October 2001.



“Vanguard of the Proletariat”. It is not surprising that a number of analysts have described the radical Islamist movement that he spawned as a form of Islamic Leninism.<sup>8</sup> Qutb’s advocacy of violence and claim that it was the religious duty of Muslims to challenge the authority of non-Islamist governments was a major influence on Iranian revolutionaries and later groups such as Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and al Qaeda.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a seminal event in the evolution of Islamist extremism as it brought together fighters from different strands of radical Islam and revived the idea of jihad to evict foreign occupiers from Muslim territory. In this context, Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, known as the “Godfather of Jihad”, is of particular note as he helped develop the concept of a global terrorist network by placing Islamic universalism above considerations of sectarianism or nationalism.<sup>9</sup> Osama bin Laden and his deputy and chief ideologist Ayman al Zawahiri have built on the legacy of radical Islamist thinkers to create the principles and strategy to support al Qaeda’s global jihad. In 1998, in another echo of revolutionary Marxism, bin Laden announced the creation of the *World Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders*<sup>10</sup>. His intention was to erect an umbrella organization for Islamist groups from Morocco to China.

Over time the basic religious and political agenda of al Qaeda has remained constant and focused on two major goals: the expulsion of foreign forces and influences from Moslem societies and ultimately the creation of an Islamic caliphate ruled by sharia law.<sup>11</sup> The concept of armed resistance, or defensive jihad, is central to al Qaeda’s thinking as it appeals to the collective religious duty of all Muslims to come to the defense of the faith. The two key al Qaeda policy statements of the 1990s both invoked defensive jihad, but also demonstrated the terrorist group’s intention to take the war to America and its allies - “the far enemy”. In the *Declaration of Jihad against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Mosques*<sup>12</sup>, issued in 1996, bin Laden described his enemies as the “alliance of Jews, Christians and their agents” and condemned the US presence in Saudi Arabia and support for Israel. Defensive jihad was also invoked in the 1998 “fatwa”, which called for armed resistance and ruled that “to kill the Americans and their allies - civilians and military is an individual duty for every Muslim...”<sup>13</sup> In 2002, bin Laden made a further unequivocal statement that he regarded all Americans as legitimate targets. Al Zawahiri expressed similar sentiments about the British people after the London bombings in July 2005.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See for example: Robert R. Reilly, op cit, p. 9, Thomas Friedman “The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Globalized World in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, London: Allen Lane, 2005 pp. 393 - 395 and John Gray “Al Qaeda and what it means to be Modern”, London: Faber & Faber, 2003, pp. 3 - 4.

<sup>9</sup> Al Azzam’s uncompromising slogan “Jihad and the rifle alone: no negotiations, no conferences and no dialogues” is said to have inspired bin Laden amongst others. See Perspectives on World History and Current Events: Middle East Project <http://www.pwhce.org/azzam.html>.

<sup>10</sup> This formed part of the 1998 fatwa urging jihad against the US. This organization was replaced by a new framework called Qa’idat al-Jihad (The Jihad Base) in spring 2002. See: Ely Karmon, “Al-Qa’ida and the War on Terror After the War in Iraq”, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 2006) pp. 1 - 22, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> See Christopher Blanchard, *Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology*, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, 26 January 2006.

<sup>12</sup> *Al Islah*, in Arabic, London, 2 September 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Text of Fatwa Urging Jihad Against Americans, *Al- Quds al- Arabi*, in Arabic, London, 23 February 1998, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> “Letter to the American People” (Internet) Waaqiah, text in English 26 October 2002 and the transcript of Zawahiri’s message regarding the July 2005 bombings on BBC News 16 November 2005. Available from: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle\\_east/4443364.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/4443364.stm).



Despite the loss of its base in Afghanistan, al Qaeda remains the inspiration for a whole new generation of Islamist extremists, including the “born-again” converts from the Muslim Diaspora who were responsible for the attacks in Madrid and London. Terrorist analyst, Marc Sageman, has described these European jihadists as groups of friends whose primary motivation is grounded in group dynamics and identity with support from the virtual “umma” on the Internet.<sup>15</sup> However, Sageman’s findings also stress the importance of a “link to the jihad”, which provides the necessary resources and know-how to turn would be fighters into effective terrorists.<sup>16</sup> Information emerging from investigations into terrorist activity in the UK suggests that contacts with militants in Pakistan are a significant feature of the planning and indoctrination process; although the extent of Al Qaeda’s direct involvement in UK terrorism remains unclear.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Sources of Radicalization**

In its report on the London bombings, the UK Intelligence and Security Committee stressed the importance of understanding radicalization, especially as the Security Service (normally referred to as MI5) could find “no simple Islamist extremist profile” and concluded that those who appeared to be well assimilated into mainstream British society might pose just as significant a threat as individuals from socially or economically deprived sections of the community.<sup>18</sup> The British government’s counter terrorism strategy paper published in July 2006 offered a preliminary analysis of the potential factors leading to radicalization, but acknowledged that radicalized individuals did not necessarily go on to become terrorists.<sup>19</sup> Three major factors were put forward for consideration: a sense of grievance and injustice, personal alienation or community disadvantage, and exposure to radical ideas. A wide range of specific issues were also identified as potential influences on the radicalization process both domestically and internationally, including the disruptive impact of globalization, Western policies in the Muslim world, social exclusion and discrimination in the community, and inspirational role models.

The widespread protests in February 2006 against the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed provided a graphic illustration of the antipathy felt by Muslim extremists towards the West. In London, marchers held placards calling for those who insulted Islam to be butchered and promised that Europe would experience its own holocaust, sentiments that are not representative of the majority of British Moslems. The uproar associated with the cartoons contributed significantly to what *The Pew Global Attitudes Project* has described as a “great divide” separating the viewpoints of Westerners from those of Moslems.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, a low

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<sup>15</sup> Marc Sageman, Presentation to the Program for Terrorism and Security Studies, George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies, February 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004, pp. 120 – 121.

<sup>17</sup> See for example: Home Office, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005*, The Stationery Office, 11 May 2006, p. 20. Available from <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/7-july-report.pdf?view=Binary> and Nicola Woodcock, “Al-Qaeda Wanted Multiple Bombing”, *The Times*, 30 March 2006. In a video broadcast in September 2005, Al Zawahiri claimed that Al Qaeda launched the bombing attacks in London.

<sup>18</sup> Intelligence and Security Committee, op cit, p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom’s Strategy, Cm. 6888, The Stationery Office, July 2006, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> The Pew Global Attitudes Project *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other* 22 June 2006. Available from [www.pewglobal.org](http://www.pewglobal.org). The survey found that although Western and Muslim publics viewed

opinion of Western publics does not necessarily translate into support for terrorism. The same survey found that 70% of British Muslims questioned felt that violence against civilians could not be justified in defense of Islam; although less reassuringly, 15% felt that it could be sanctioned at least sometimes.<sup>21</sup> That a minority of British Muslims appear to support extremism is confirmed by other recent public opinion polls. The Populus poll for *The Times* and ITV News in July 2006 found that 13% of British Muslims surveyed believed that the July 2005 bombers should be regarded as “martyrs”, 2% would be proud if a family member joined Al Qaeda and 16% would be “indifferent” about such a decision.<sup>22</sup> A Poll by NOP for Channel 4 reported that 9% of Muslims surveyed strongly agreed or tended to agree that the use of violence by political or religious groups was “acceptable”.<sup>23</sup>

The Iraq war is mentioned as a catalyst for radicalization by a number of sources, not least the US National Intelligence Estimate of April 2006, which described the conflict as the “cause celebre” for jihadists.<sup>24</sup> Peter Neumann, the Director of the Centre for Defence Studies at King’s College London has stated that “The Iraq War contributed to the radicalization of European Muslims, creating a more supportive environment which Salafi jihadists could draw on for finance and recruits.”<sup>25</sup> After the foiled plot in August 2006 to blow up aircraft on transatlantic flights, leading British Muslims wrote to Prime Minister, Tony Blair to assert that British foreign policy provided “ammunition to extremists”. The letter made specific reference to “the debacle of Iraq.”<sup>26</sup> Not surprisingly, the British government has consistently rejected any suggestion that the war has made the UK a target for terrorist attack and calls for a public inquiry into the effects of British foreign policy on radicalization have been refused. It is debatable whether such an enquiry would have assuaged the feelings of the 31% of young Muslims questioned by the NOP poll in April 2006 who agreed that the July 2005 bombings were justified because of British involvement in “the war on terror”, which is perceived by many Muslims as a war against Islam.<sup>27</sup> As will be discussed below, British foreign and military policies were also cited as motivation by perpetrators of the London attacks.

Recently, some commentators and politicians have highlighted the UK’s tolerance of multiculturalism as a factor leading to the apparent alienation of young British Muslims from

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relations between them as generally bad, Europe’s Muslim minorities were consistently more moderate than their co-religionists elsewhere in the world.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, pp 3 – 4. The Office of National Statistics using figures from the 2001 census estimates that there are 1.6 Muslims in the UK, with Pakistanis making up the largest non-white, ethno-religious group in Britain with a population of 700,000 concentrated in Birmingham, Bradford and London. See: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=293>.

<sup>22</sup> Alexandra Frean and Rajeev Syal, “Muslim Britain Split Over Martyrs of 7/7”, *Times Online*, 4 July 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Growth from Knowledge, NOP Social Research, *Attitudes to Living in Britain – A Survey of Muslim Opinion*, 27 April 2006, p. 35. Available from: [http://www.imagineate.uk.com/MCC01\\_SURVEY/Site%20Download.pdf](http://www.imagineate.uk.com/MCC01_SURVEY/Site%20Download.pdf). Curiously the same survey found that 45% of Muslims polled believed that 9/11 attacks were a conspiracy by the US and Israel.

<sup>24</sup> Declassified Key Judgments of the National Intelligence Assessment “Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States” dated April 2006. Available from: [http://www.dni.gov/press\\_releases/Declassified\\_NIE\\_Key\\_Judgments.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/Declassified_NIE_Key_Judgments.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Neumann, op cit, p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> BBC News *Full Text: Muslim Groups’ Letter* 12 August 2006. Available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk\\_news/4786159.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/4786159.stm) See also “Miles Apart” *The Economist*, 19 August 2006, pp. 22 – 23.

<sup>27</sup> NOP, *Attitudes to Living in Britain*, op cit, p. 34.

mainstream influences in society.<sup>28</sup> The well meaning attempt by the political establishment over the last twenty years to avoid imposing a single British identity and culture is blamed for the self imposed segregation of Muslim communities, a proliferation of mosques staffed by radical clerics and the establishment of Muslim faith schools that emphasize Koranic studies and teach South Asian languages. Many Muslims agree that assimilation needs to be improved. For example, the Populus Poll referred to earlier found that 65% of Muslims surveyed felt that their community needed to integrate properly with British society.<sup>29</sup> Problems of alienation and unfulfilled expectations are frequently cited by analysts as a significant factor in the motivation of young European Muslims to join jihadist groups.<sup>30</sup> Psychiatrist Anne Speckhard suggests that an additional factor is a conscious repudiation of the perceived corruption of the West through the cleansing embrace of a particularly fundamentalist and militant form of Islam.<sup>31</sup> Some British Muslims have also argued that the roots of the radicalization problem are economic and social, pointing to relative deprivation, exclusion and discrimination.<sup>32</sup> A recent report by the Office of National Statistics concluded that British Muslims were more than twice as likely to be unemployed as followers of other faiths and up to five times as likely to live in overcrowded accommodation.<sup>33</sup> However, it is hard to establish a direct link between social exclusion and terrorism. Three of the July 2005 bombers, for example, were depicted by the Home Office official report on the attacks as “apparently well integrated into British society”.<sup>34</sup> Dhiren Barot, a Muslim on trial for a “dirty bomb” plot, has been described as “... not the usual image of a terrorist ... born a Hindu and brought up in a north London suburb by middle-class parents.”<sup>35</sup>

As John Reid’s remarks above illustrate, government ministers, anxious not to cause offence to the majority of British Muslims, avoid any suggestion that the religion of Islam itself is to blame for radicalization. The government’s counter-terrorism strategy paper is at pains to stress that the Muslim communities in the UK are not themselves viewed as a security threat. Nevertheless, a number of analysts in the UK and elsewhere have argued that violence is inherent in a fundamentalist approach to the Koran and the Hadith.<sup>36</sup> British scholar, Patrick Sookhdeo, Director of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity, has argued that Muslims need to recognize that war and terrorism feature in their teachings. He has called for Muslims to stop their self-deception that Islam is a religion of peace and “...with honesty recognize the violence

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<sup>28</sup> See for example: Michael Nazir-Ali, “Multiculturalism is to Blame for Perverting Young Muslims” *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 August 2006 and “British Exceptionalism” *The Economist*, 19 August 2006, pp. 10 – 11.

<sup>29</sup> Frean and Syal, op cit.

<sup>30</sup> See Petter Nesser, “Post-millennium patterns of Jihadist terrorism in Western Europe - Part 1, “*Jane’s Terrorism and Security Monitor*, 15 June 2005, p. 3 and Tamara Makarenko, “Takfiri Presence Grows in Europe”, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, 1 February 2005, pp. 3 – 4.

<sup>31</sup> Anne Speckhard, “Understanding Suicide Terrorism: Countering Human Bombs and Their Senders” in Jason S Purcell and Joshua D. Weintraub (Eds.), *Topics for Terrorism: Towards a Transatlantic Consensus on the Nature of the Threat*, Atlantic Council Publication 2005.

<sup>32</sup> See for example: “Just over a Year since the Terrorist Attacks on London’s Transport System on July 7, 2005, Britain is on Alert Again”, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 16 August 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Office of National Statistics, *Focus on Ethnicity and Religion 2006*, October 2006. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14629>.

<sup>34</sup> Home Office, *Official Account*, op cit, p. 26.

<sup>35</sup> Duncan Gardham, “Muslim was Planning Dirty Bomb Attack in UK”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 October 2006.

<sup>36</sup> See for example: Sam Harris, “The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason” New York: Norton & Company, 2005. Farhad Khosrokhavar, “Suicide Bombers: Allah’s New Martyrs”, London: Pluto Press, 2005. Of particular note are the remarks of the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, quoted in Mark Tooley, “Department of Strange Bedfellows”, *The Weekly Standard*, 29 September 2006.

that has existed in their history in the same way that Christians have had to do.”<sup>37</sup> Similar calls for Muslims to engage in the ideological battle for the future of Islam have come from scholars and commentators on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>38</sup> However, British official CIST efforts do not address the religious debate directly. The government is naturally reluctant to intervene in a matter that is best left to Islamic clerics and scholars. At the same time there is growing official frustration that Muslim community leaders are not doing enough to tackle the extremism in their midst.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Background and Motivation of “Home Grown” Terrorists**

What of the background, influences and motivations of the actual terrorists or would be terrorists themselves? Clearly with many investigations on-going and some cases still sub-judice, it is impossible to obtain a complete picture of what has inspired British Muslims to kill their fellow citizens. The official report by the Home Office into the July 2005 bombings offers the most comprehensive analysis to date, but as the authors acknowledge, much remains to be done. Nevertheless, the personal profiles offered in the report provide useful insights into the radicalization process and are therefore summarized below.<sup>40</sup>

The bombers were aged between 18 and 30. Two were married with children. Three of them were second generation British citizens of Pakistani origin, who grew up in an area described by the report as “deprived”, although none were considered poor by the standards of the area. The fourth bomber was born in Jamaica and had an unstable family background, although the report does not attempt to link this directly to his radicalization. Mohammed Siddeque Khan, the oldest and presumed leader, was a well-respected teaching assistant and youth worker, who was considered a role model for young people. He is also described as someone who used drugs and alcohol and “got into fights” in his youth, but had become religiously devote and clean living from the late 1990s onwards. In view of the psychological profile identified by Speckhard noted above, it is interesting that one of the suspects arrested following the August 2006 airline bomb plot is also reported to have had trouble with drugs and alcohol before a recent life changing conversion to Islam.<sup>41</sup> Shazad Tanweer had recently left university. Hasib Hussein had just completed school and Jermaine Lindsay had worked in a series of odd jobs. The Home Office report claims that the backgrounds of the individuals were “unexceptional” and John Reid described the bombers as “ordinary British citizens.”<sup>42</sup> However, the bombers’ behavior hardly merits these descriptions. All four were particularly devout, by normal Muslim standards in the

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<sup>37</sup> Patrick Sookhdeo, “The Myth of Moderate Islam”, *The Spectator*, Volume 298, Issue 9234, 30 July 2005, pp. 12 – 15.

<sup>38</sup> See for example: M. Zuhdi Jasser, “Muslims in the Crosshairs”, *Washington Times*, 3 August 2006 and Shmuel Bar “The Religious Sources of Islamic Terrorism”, *Policy Review*, No. 125, June/July 2004. Available from: <http://www.policyreview.org/jun04/bar.html>.

<sup>39</sup> See: David Hencke and Hugh Mair, “Kelly: imams failing to deter extremism”, *The Guardian*, 14 August 2006 and Toby Helm, “Back British Values or Lose Grants, Kelly tells Muslim Groups”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 October 2006.

<sup>40</sup> The investigators description of the background and lifestyle of the bombers is in Home Office, *Official Account*, op cit, pp. 13 - 18.

<sup>41</sup> Jumana Farouky, “Profile the Suspects: Converts to Islam”, *Time* 11 August 2006. Available from: <http://www.time.com/time/world/printout/0,8816,1225687,00.html>.

<sup>42</sup> House of Commons Hansard Debates for 11 May 2006 (pt 0126) Col. 522.

UK.<sup>43</sup> Lindsay was a recent convert to Islam, who seems to have been strongly influenced by the extremist preacher, Abdallah al Faisal, now serving a prison sentence for incitement to murder and racial hatred. The others were reported to have become increasingly strict in their religious observance in recent years.<sup>44</sup> Investigations have shown that the group was in contact with other extremists in the UK and both Khan and Tanweer are known to have visited Pakistan, where it is thought that they met with Al Qaeda members.<sup>45</sup> Like other European jihadists, Khan, Tanweer and Hussein appear to have bonded through mosques, youth clubs, a gym and an Islamic bookshop. Some acquaintances interviewed for the report claimed that some of these establishments were “centers of extremism”, but the evidence is far from conclusive. The group also took part in outdoor activities such as camping and white water rafting, which may have offered opportunities for further bonding and ideological indoctrination.<sup>46</sup>

In a video made by Khan, he claimed that perceived injustices by the West justified violence to protect and avenge other Muslims. His message was couched in religious terms and his separate last Will and Testament stressed the importance of martyrdom as evidence of commitment to Islam.<sup>47</sup> Tanweer’s statement, which did not emerge until the anniversary of the bombings in 2006, is much more explicit as it refers not only to the religious duties of all Muslims to fight for Allah, but also to the British presence in Afghanistan and Iraq and support for the US and Israel.<sup>48</sup> Little concrete is known about the motivation of the other bombers although Hussain and Lindsay were noted to have expressed extremist views at school.<sup>49</sup>

The final section of the Home Office report attempts to set the radicalization process of the July 2005 bombers in a wider context, given what is known about other Islamist terrorist conspiracies in the UK.<sup>50</sup> Firstly, family background and social or economic circumstances appear to give no indication of an individual’s relative vulnerability to radicalization.<sup>51</sup> Attendance at a mosque with links to extremists is often a factor, although the report acknowledges that radicals increasingly use private houses and other premises to avoid detection. Not surprisingly, exposure to extremist spiritual leaders is also identified as a common contributor to radicalization, not only through direct contacts, but often by means of audio-visual material and the Internet. Mentorship is described as having a potentially “critical” impact. Mentors, like Khan, have helped to identify and groom potential terrorist recruits and assist them to bond with like-minded individuals. The

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<sup>43</sup> For example, in the NOP Poll of April 2006, 54% of Muslims surveyed stated that they never attended a mosque or only did so on special occasions.

<sup>44</sup> Devout religious observance has been a notable feature of the behavior of suspects in other terrorist cases in the UK, although traditional dress and displays of religion have become more popular generally with young Muslims in the last decade. See: Sean Rayment “MI5 Fears Silent Army of 1,200 Biding Its Time in the Suburbs”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 June 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Intelligence and Security Committee, op cit, p. 12.

<sup>46</sup> An interest in outdoor activities appears to have been a common factor for members of other terrorist cells disrupted before and after July 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Home Office, *Official Account*, op cit, p. 19.

<sup>48</sup> The full text of Tanweer’s statement is available from The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Clip No. 1186, 8 July 2005. <http://www.memritv.org/Transcript.asp?P1=1186> In a typical example of black propaganda, the broadcast implicates the UK in ‘the genocide of over 150,000 innocent Muslims in Fallujah’.

<sup>49</sup> Home Office, *Official Account*, op cit, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, pp. 31 – 32.

<sup>51</sup> This conclusion is supported by initial reports on the backgrounds of suspects in the August 2006 transatlantic flights bombing plot. See “Who are the Terror Suspects” *BBC News*, 11 August 2006. Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/gov/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk/47832215.stm> and Kamran Siddique, “My friend: the football fan who dreamed of being a doctor”, *The Guardian*, 15 August 2006.



Home Office report identifies common stages in the grooming process. Initially mentors place an emphasis on being a devote Muslim, without introducing an extremist agenda. Potential recruits are then subjected to propaganda illustrating the abuse and persecution of Muslims around the world. Religious justifications from the Koran and Hadith are then given for violent jihad and, in the case of suicide attacks, the importance and rewards of martyrdom are emphasized. The report concludes that there is little evidence of compulsion. Instead, the mentors rely on building individual commitment to the cause along with group identity and solidarity.

## **UK Government Policies to Address Radicalization**

The British government's long-term strategy for tackling terrorism is known as "Contest". The strategy aims to both reduce the threat to the UK and its vulnerability to a terrorist attack. Counter-terrorist activities are divided into four principal strands known as "Prevent", "Pursue", "Protect" and "Prepare".<sup>52</sup> CIST measures form the core of the "Prevent" strand, which focuses on reducing the number of individuals inclined to support Islamist terrorism or become terrorists themselves. The government has recognized that it is no longer possible to separate the domestic and international dimensions of the threat and the strategy reflects this. In July 2006, following detailed analysis of the context of the July 2005 bombings, the government launched an unclassified strategy paper for countering international terrorism based on "Contest". This provides the best summary of UK CIST policies to date.<sup>53</sup>

Reflecting the level of threat, the UK has gone further than its European partners to engage with Muslim communities and produce a comprehensive package of measures to address radicalization. By comparison, European counter-terrorism strategies with respect to CIST tend to provide general statements of intent rather than policy specifics.<sup>54</sup> UK thinking on CIST is essentially sober and pragmatic, rather than idealistic. Whereas the US *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) of 2006 states that "...the appeal of freedom is the best long-term counter to the ideology of the extremists,"<sup>55</sup> the UK places noticeably less emphasis in official documents on an ideological struggle between democratic freedoms and extremism.

The first set of UK CIST measures comes under the official heading "Tackling disadvantage and supporting reform"<sup>56</sup> and reflects the government's belief that inequalities and lack of opportunity in the UK and abroad contribute to Muslim radicalization. The *Improving*

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<sup>52</sup> "Contest" is a classified document, but a general description of the strategy is given in the official reports on the July 2005 bombings referred to here. The Home Secretary also describes Contest in Hansard Debates for 10 July 2006, op cit, Columns 1115 – 1118.

<sup>53</sup> Countering International Terrorism, op cit, pp. 11 – 16.

<sup>54</sup> See for example: Council of the European Union, The European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism, 14781/1/05 REV 1, Brussels, 24 November 2005, pp. 1 – 6 and Prevailing Against Terrorism: White Paper on Domestic Security Against Terrorism, (Le documentation Française: Paris) 2006, pp. 115 – 122.

<sup>55</sup> US Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 6 February 2006, p. 22. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/dod/qdr-2006-report.pdf> See also National Security Advisor, Stephen Hadley's speech to the United States Institute of Peace regarding the National Security Strategy delivered on 16 March 2006. Available from: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/wh/63257.htm>.

<sup>56</sup> Countering International Terrorism, op cit, p. 11.

*Opportunities, Strengthening Society*<sup>57</sup> policy paper is a broad race and community cohesion strategy launched in January 2005. It is intended to help Muslims and other minorities improve educational performance, employment opportunities and housing conditions. This initiative includes support to Muslim faith based organizations to engage with the government, other faiths and civil society more effectively. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion<sup>58</sup> was announced in June 2006. The commission works with Muslim communities to examine causes of tension, barriers to integration and the means of improving the capacity of these communities to resist extremist ideologies. The commission is due to report its findings to the government in July 2007. With the issue of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) strategic priorities in March 2006, the government reaffirmed that countering terrorism was the department's foremost task.<sup>59</sup> The government claims that the FCO's Global Opportunities Fund supports projects and initiatives intended to promote effective, accountable governments, democratic institutions and human rights in the Muslim world.<sup>60</sup> In view of the perceived role of schools in the radicalization process, the FCO has focused on educational reform, including the establishment of partnerships with madrassas in Pakistan and Bangladesh and enhanced scholarship and exchange programs targeted at Muslim countries. As a contribution to "The battle of ideas", the FCO has also increased its complement of Arabic and Urdu speakers in order to be more proactive in explaining British foreign policy and highlight the development aid and security assistance provided by the UK to Moslems in places such as Kosovo, Bosnia and Kashmir.

The second set of CIST activities is entitled "Deterring those who facilitate terrorism."<sup>61</sup> The main focus here is on enhancements to counter-terrorism legislation to combat the spread of extremist ideas. *The Terrorism Act 2006*<sup>62</sup> made it a criminal offence to encourage acts of terrorism, including the distribution of publications advocating or glorifying terror. It also broadened the criteria to proscribe organizations that promote terrorism. A list of so called *Unacceptable Behaviours* was published by the Home Office in August 2005.<sup>63</sup> This identified activities that could lead to non-UK citizens being excluded or deported, namely the use of any medium to foster hatred or justify terrorism. The *Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006*<sup>64</sup> has also been introduced in support of these measures to facilitate deportation. This remains a contentious issue, as there are tensions between attempts to speed up the process of deportation and the country's obligations under the *European Convention on Human Rights* not to return individuals to states where they may be subject to torture or abuse.<sup>65</sup> Mr. Andy Hayman, Assistant Commissioner on Special Operations, Metropolitan Police, has described

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<sup>57</sup> Available from the Home Office website at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/improving-opportunity-strat?view=Binary>.

<sup>58</sup> The Terms of Reference of the Commission are available from the Department for Communities and Local Government website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1501522>.

<sup>59</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: The UK's International Priorities*, Cm. 6762, The Stationery Office, March 2006, p. 29. Available from: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/fullintpriorities2006.pdf>.

<sup>60</sup> Countering International Terrorism, op cit, p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> Countering International Terrorism, op cit, p. 12.

<sup>62</sup> Full text available from: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/60011-b.htm>.

<sup>63</sup> See "Acts of Hate: full list of deportation acts" *Times Online*, 24 August 2005. Available from: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-20749-1748674-20749,00.html>.

<sup>64</sup> Full text available from: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/20060013.htm>.

<sup>65</sup> See discussion in UK Parliament Home Affairs Committee, *Counter-terrorism and Community Relations in the Aftermath of the London Bombings*, Uncorrected Transcript of Oral Evidence, 13 September 2005, p. 5 & p. 11.



prisons as a “hot spot” for radicalization.<sup>66</sup> Consequently, initiatives to prevent radicalization within the prison population are also included under the “deterrence” category.<sup>67</sup> Proposals include specialist training for Imams working within the prison service, a mentoring program to identify prisoners susceptible to extremist views and support for Muslim prisoners to reintegrate into society following the end of their sentence.

The third set is referred to as “The battle of ideas”.<sup>68</sup> Under a project called Preventing Extremism Together, seven community-led working groups were established as part of a major government effort to engage with Muslim community leaders, women and young people.<sup>69</sup> Principle recommendations from this initiative engendered: a Scholars’ Roadshow, which provides an opportunity for Islamic scholars and thinkers to argue against extremism and terrorism with young British Muslims, the creation of regional forums to bring together members of local Muslim communities, the police and public service agencies to discuss action against both radicalization and Islamophobia, and a Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board to examine the accreditation of Imams, improve the governance of mosques and increase interfaith activity. At the time of writing, government action had already been completed on other recommendations including measures to improve the attainments of Muslim students and extend equal opportunities legislation to cover discrimination on the grounds of faith. However, there has also been criticism that the government has been tardy in addressing some proposals<sup>70</sup> and the Liberal Democrat peer, Lady Falkner, has dismissed the whole exercise as “...a very hurried, let’s-do-something sort of response rather than anything substantive.”<sup>71</sup> Other commentators have argued that the government may be confronting extremism in the wrong places as available information suggests that the radicalization of individuals is taking place away from established mosques and community facilities.<sup>72</sup>

### **CIST: The Barriers to Effective Implementation**

At a presentation in 2003, the Director General of the UK Security Service, Eliza Manningham-Buller, acknowledged the severity of the ideological challenge confronting British policy makers and security officials:

“Breaking the link between terrorism and religious ideology will be difficult in the short term. Political dialogue and a process of reconciliation are not on the horizon as groups like Al Qaida have aims that are absolute and non-negotiable.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Counter-Terrorism and Community Relations in the Aftermath of the London Bombings, op cit, p. 19.

<sup>67</sup> See House of Commons Hansard Written Answers for 8 March 2006 (pt 30).

<sup>68</sup> Countering International Terrorism, op cit, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> Under a government reorganization of May 2006, responsibility for this project has been taken over by the Department for Communities and Local Government. For details, see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1501973>.

<sup>70</sup> See for example: Hansard 10 Jul 06, op cit, columns 1122 – 1123.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Martin Bright, “When Progressives Treat with Reactionaries: The British State’s flirtation with radical Islamism”, *Policy Exchange* (London: Policy Exchange Limited) 2006, p. 26. Available from: [www.policyexchange.org.uk](http://www.policyexchange.org.uk)

<sup>72</sup> See for example: Faisal Devji “A Muslim Militancy Born of Modernity not Mosques” *Financial Times*, 28 August 2006, p. 11.

<sup>73</sup> Speech to the Royal United Services Institute 17 June 2003 <http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page210.html>

Since 2003, the British government has increasingly placed efforts to combat radicalization at center stage of its overall counter-terrorism strategy. However, CIST remains a work in progress. It will take time to both fully understand the process of radicalization in the UK and for domestic and international policy initiatives to have an impact. The British government's efforts to sway Muslim opinion at home and abroad will continue to be hamstrung because of the unpopularity of Britain's policies in the Moslem world. It is also questionable whether efforts by the UK and other Western states to work through friendly Moslem governments and elites will find a receptive audience in communities where ordinary citizens are already alienated from these same governments and elites. Terrorism analyst, Sebestyén Gorka claims that the West has already lost the battle for perceptions because of the immaturity of political environments in the Middle East and Central Asia and the widespread influence of anti-Western conspiracy theories in these regions.<sup>74</sup>

CIST may be a lengthy process, but unfortunately, intelligence agencies have identified that the radicalization of young Muslims can take place very rapidly.<sup>75</sup> Inevitably, such heightened threat perception has led to a more proactive and intrusive police presence in Muslim communities. Security alerts, especially when they involve the arrest or shooting of innocent people, infuriate ordinary Muslim citizens and undermine the government's efforts to promote cooperation against radicalization. A report by Congressional Research Service claimed that nearly nine hundred people had been arrested in the UK since "9/11" under anti-terrorism laws, but only one hundred and thirty eight had been charged with terrorist related offences, and only twenty three actually convicted.<sup>76</sup> The UK's most senior Muslim police officer, Tarique Ghaffur, has claimed that robust police action and tougher terrorism laws have discriminated against Muslims and caused distrust, anger and alienation.<sup>77</sup> However, government ministers and security forces face what BBC political journalist Andrew Marr has called an "appalling dilemma"<sup>78</sup>, being caught between over reacting to threats on the basis of unquantifiable intelligence or not doing enough to prevent an attack and being universally condemned for inaction. After the shooting of an innocent man during a house search for a chemical device in June 2006, police in London have agreed to consult a panel of Muslim leaders before mounting counter terrorist raids or making arrests. The panel will have the opportunity to offer their assessment of the accuracy of the police intelligence and the impact of the raid on community relations. It is not yet known whether the panel will be allowed access to classified information from the Security Service.<sup>79</sup> What is clear is that tension between the "Prevent" and "Pursue" strands of the government's counter-terrorism strategy seems set to continue.

The government's attempts to co-opt Muslim leaders in the struggle against terrorism have proved controversial, with complaints that too much weight has been given to the views of more radical elements in Muslim communities, which has left mainstream Moslems underrepresented

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<sup>74</sup> Sebestyén L. v. Gorka "Al Qaeda and Von Clausewitz Rediscovering the Art of War" Unpublished paper delivered at the US Joint Special Forces University Symposium, *Countering Global Insurgency*, 2 – 5 May 2006.

<sup>75</sup> Intelligence and Security Committee, op cit, p. 29

<sup>76</sup> "European Approaches to Homeland Security and Counter Terrorism" *Congressional Research Service*, 24 July 06, p. 43.

<sup>77</sup> Assistant Commissioner Tarique Ghaffur quoted in John Steele "Tougher Police Tactics on Terror Driving Muslims Apart, says Police Chief", *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 August 2006.

<sup>78</sup> "Ministers Highlight UK Terror Threat" *BBC News*, 14 February 2003; available at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/2751361.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/2751361.stm).

<sup>79</sup> Abdul Taher "Police to Brief Muslims Before Terror Raids" *The Sunday Times*, 24 September 2006.

in the consultation process.<sup>80</sup> The situation is not helped by the need for Muslim leaders to condemn extremism, but at the same time avoid being perceived by their constituents as government stooges. One of the problems confronting the government and local authorities' attempts to find credible partners to confront radicalization is that Britain's Muslims are deeply divided and are represented by a variety of associations that are often in dispute with each other.<sup>81</sup> The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is still viewed as the main voice of British Muslims, but it is challenged on the one hand by the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), which is ideologically close to the Muslim Brotherhood, and on the other by the more liberal Sufi influenced, British Muslim Forum (BMF). In addition, there are a number of smaller groups including the al Khoei Foundation, which represents the UK's small population of Shia Muslims, the British Muslim Initiative, and radical affiliates of the banned al Muhajiroun group. Islamist organizations that claim to eschew violence, but have nevertheless been linked to extremism, create particular difficulties in a liberal democracy with a tradition of freedom of speech and association. Recently both the missionary group, Tablighi Jamaat and the radical international political Islamist group, Hizb ut Tahrir, have come under the spotlight with calls for their proscription.<sup>82</sup> The BMF claims to represent 80% of British Muslims but complains that unlike the MCB it lacks the ear of the government.<sup>83</sup> In a monograph released by the conservative *Policy Exchange* research institute, Martin Bright, the editor of the left-wing *New Statesman* magazine has accused the government of working with unrepresentative radical Islamists in both the UK and the Middle East.<sup>84</sup> Bright argues that the government has treated radical Islamists in the MCB and Muslim Brotherhood as the voices of mainstream Muslim opinion and consequently granted them an undeserved legitimacy. He claims that "Whitehall has embraced a narrow, austere version of the (Muslim) religion" that is not helping the tackle the ideology that breeds terrorism.<sup>85</sup> The UK authorities are caught in a central dilemma of the war on terror, namely the degree to which a government can establish a dialogue with political Islamists without being seen to legitimize terrorism.

The UK's perception of the threat from Islamist terrorism remains grave. Peter Clarke, Scotland Yard's Head of Counter-Terrorism, recently told a BBC 2 interviewer that the police were monitoring thousands of people in the UK and described the intelligence picture as "very disturbing".<sup>86</sup> In these circumstances, there is a real danger of polarization between Muslim communities and mainstream British society. Ghaffur has warned of a sense of separateness in Muslim communities and the demonization of Muslims and Islam by the media.<sup>87</sup> A You Gov poll for *The Daily Telegraph* in August 2006 found that 53% of people surveyed felt that Islam

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<sup>80</sup> See for example: House of Commons Hansard Debates for 5 December 2005 (pt 3), Column 593.

<sup>81</sup> "Who Speaks for British Muslims", *The Economist*, 17 June 2006, pp. 36 – 38.

<sup>82</sup> See for example: Sean O'Neill and Roger Boyes "Islamic Missionary Group Links Alleged Plotters", *Times Online*, 17 August 2006. Available from: [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-2-23166\\_67-2,00.html](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-2-23166_67-2,00.html) and "Hizb ut Tahrir", *BBC News*, 6 August 2005. Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4127688.stm>.

<sup>83</sup> "Immoderate Voices", *The Wall Street Journal*, 18 – 20 August 2006, p. 12.

<sup>84</sup> Martin Bright, op cit. Particular criticism is directed at the "Arabists" in the FCO who advocated direct talks with Hamas and Hizbollah.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>86</sup> Peter Clarke quoted in BBC News, "Terror Police Monitor Thousands", 2 September 2006. Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hk/uk/5306580.stm>.

<sup>87</sup> Steele, op cit. One senior government adviser in conversation with the author claimed that there was even a danger of "Intifada" in British cities.

itself, as distinct from Islamic fundamentalism, posed a “major” or “some” threat.<sup>88</sup> Only 16% answered positively to the question “practically all British Muslims are peaceful, law abiding citizens who deplore terrorist acts as much as anyone else.” Another You Gov poll for *The Spectator* in September 2006 found that 73% of respondents agreed that the West was in a global war against Islamic terrorism. Clearly these polls may have been influenced by the major terrorist plot uncovered in August and publicity surrounding the fifth anniversary of “9/11”, but nevertheless there has been a growing consensus recently from all shades of political opinion that it is time to reassert so called mainstream British values. Part of this trend is a reaction to the perceived takeover of “political correctness”, but there are also more disturbing indications that this is the beginning of a backlash against what are widely viewed as unwarranted concessions to Muslim sensitivities in the name of multiculturalism and appeasement.<sup>89</sup> Such developments are unlikely to make the government’s attempts to engage Muslim communities any easier.

## Conclusions

It is still too early to judge the effectiveness of British attempts to combat radicalization. There remains only a partial understanding of both the ideological dimension of the threat and the motivation of terrorists who have mounted or attempted to mount attacks in the UK. Some advances have been made. For example, it is far harder for extremist Islamist clerics to preach an ideology of hatred openly. However, it remains to be seen whether the government’s strenuous efforts to engage Muslims in the CIST effort will prove fruitful or fail in the face of sectarian divisions and a growing siege mentality generally within Muslim communities. The perception that British foreign policy amounts to a war against Muslims is likely to persist; the anticipated change of Prime Minister next year is unlikely to prompt a shift in the UK’s international security priorities. As emphasized above, CIST measures will take time. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the jihadists will grant the government the time it needs to advance its CIST agenda. Another serious Islamist terrorist attack against civilians in the UK will likely lead to even tougher law enforcement measures that will further isolate ordinary Muslims and worse could provoke a violent backlash from elements of the white majority. Measured by any yardstick, the situation does indeed remain in Peter Clarke’s words “very disturbing”.

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<sup>88</sup> Both *You Gov* surveys quoted here are available from: [www.yougov.com](http://www.yougov.com).

<sup>89</sup> See for example: Patience Wheatcroft “Multiculturalism hasn’t worked: let’s rediscover Britishness” *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 October 2006, Henry Porter, “Jack Straw should be praised for lifting the veil on taboo”, *The Observer*, 8 October 2006 and “Multi-faith agenda separates UK”, *BBC News*, 10 August 2006. Available from: [http://newsvote.bbc.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/hi/uk\\_news/4801605.stm](http://newsvote.bbc.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/hi/uk_news/4801605.stm)

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